

AMENDED IN SENATE JUNE 19, 1997
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY MAY 19, 1997
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 16, 1997
AMENDED IN ASSEMBLY APRIL 14, 1997

CALIFORNIA LEGISLATURE—1997–98 REGULAR SESSION

ASSEMBLY BILL

No. 898

Introduced by Assembly Member Napolitano
(Coauthors: Assembly Members Alquist, Mazzoni, Richter,
Takasugi, and Wayne)
(Coauthors: Senators Dills, Hughes, Karnette, Rosenthal,
Vasconcellos, and Watson)

February 27, 1997

An act to add Section 15364.56 to the Government Code, relating to tourism.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 898, as amended, Napolitano. Tourism: commemoration of Japanese American fishing community.

Existing law establishes the Office of Tourism within the Trade and Commerce Agency. Under existing law, a California Welcome Center may be designated according to conditions established by the Office of Tourism, and a state historical landmark or point of historical interest may be designated pursuant to procedures and criteria established by the State Historical Resources Commission. The existing Tourism Policy Act includes among its purposes

encouragement of the preservation and use of California historic and scenic environments to enhance California's appeal as a destination for domestic and international tourism.

This bill would make findings and declarations relating to the fishing community known as Fish Harbor, which was occupied by Japanese American fishermen prior to the bombing of Pearl Harbor, at which time its residents were removed to internment camps. The bill would require the Office of Tourism to establish a fund for the creation of a Japanese American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center, to be located at Terminal Island, at Worldport Los Angeles, and would provide that a minimum of \$148,000 shall be made available, upon appropriation in the Budget Act, from the General Fund for this purpose, contingent upon receipt of at least \$1,000 in matching funds from private sources. The bill would also direct the Port of Los Angeles ~~to make every effort~~ to apply for designation as a California Welcome Center at any suitable site, and as a state historical landmark or point of historical interest, as specified.

Vote: majority. Appropriation: no. Fiscal committee: yes. State-mandated local program: no.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

1 SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares as
2 follows:

3 (a) In 1901, former fishermen from Japan formed a
4 community near San Pedro.

5 (b) In 1905, they settled on Terminal Island. This was
6 a fishing community, known at the time as Fish Harbor.

7 (c) The community grew and prospered until it
8 numbered nearly 3,000 Japanese American fishermen,
9 fish-cannery workers, merchants, and residents at its
10 peak.

11 (d) By the 1930s there were at least eight canneries,
12 commercial and naval shipyards, oil tanks, steamship
13 berths, 60 stores and shops, an elementary school, a
14 Baptist mission, a Shinto shrine and a Buddhist temple.

15 (e) After the bombing of Pearl Harbor, rumors began
16 to circulate that the village on Fish Harbor was a spy

1 colony, and as a result all people of Japanese descent,
2 including American citizens, were evicted from the
3 island at gunpoint on February 25, 1942.

4 (f) With only 48 hours notice, the Japanese American
5 residents of Terminal Island were sent to internment
6 camps in a remote and barren mountain area, with only
7 the possessions they could carry with them.

8 (g) While the residents were imprisoned in
9 internment camps for the next four years, their homes
10 were looted, then bulldozed, their fishing boats were
11 repossessed or stolen, and their fishing nets rotted.

12 (h) Terminal Island was later turned into a military
13 base, and the fishing village was never rebuilt.

14 (i) Today, there are still 778 paying members of the
15 Terminal Islanders Club that continue to hold annual
16 reunions around Los Angeles County.

17 (j) The Japanese American National Museum in Los
18 Angeles held a very popular exhibition in 1994 called “An
19 Island in Time: The Terminal Island Story,” and this
20 exhibition highlighted the Fish Harbor community and
21 the innovations in fishing that the Japanese Americans
22 contributed to the industry.

23 (k) The California Tourism Policy Act encourages
24 “the preservation and use of California Historic and
25 Scenic environments to enhance the State’s appeal as a
26 destination for domestic and international tourism.”

27 SEC. 2. Section 15364.56 is added to the Government
28 Code, to read:

29 15364.56. (a) (1) The Office of Tourism shall
30 establish a fund for the creation of a Japanese American
31 Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center, to be located at
32 Terminal Island, at Worldport Los Angeles.

33 (2) A minimum of one hundred forty-eight thousand
34 dollars (\$148,000) shall be made available, upon
35 appropriation in the Budget Act, from the General Fund
36 for purposes of this section, contingent on the receipt of
37 at least one thousand dollars (\$1,000) in matching funds
38 generated from the private sector.

39 (b) (1) To the extent practicable and feasible, the
40 Port of Los Angeles shall make every effort to apply for

1 designation as a California Welcome Center at any
2 suitable site, including Ports O'Call, the Japanese
3 American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center, or
4 any other location deemed appropriate within the Port of
5 Los Angeles, provided that the Port of Los Angeles, in
6 consultation with the Office of Tourism, determines that
7 it can meet all criteria for the Welcome Center program,
8 including the need to be self-funded, sited in an
9 appropriate location, and meeting the long-term
10 interests of the state, pursuant to Section 15334.3.

11 (2) To the extent practicable and feasible, the Port of
12 Los Angeles shall ~~make every effort to~~ apply for
13 designation as a state historical landmark or point of
14 historical interest, as appropriate, pursuant to Article 2
15 (commencing with Section 5020) of Chapter 1 of Division
16 5 of the Public Resources Code.

17 (c) If the Japanese American Fishing Village site is
18 designated a state historical landmark or point of
19 historical interest, the Office of Tourism shall request the
20 Office of Historic Preservation within the Department of
21 Parks and Recreation and the Department of
22 Transportation to immediately install and maintain a
23 highway sign that identifies the location of the Japanese
24 American Fishing Village Memorial Visitors Center.

25 (d) If the Japanese American Fishing Village site is
26 designated a California Welcome Center, the Office of
27 Tourism shall request the Department of Transportation
28 to immediately install and maintain a highway sign that
29 identifies the location of the Japanese American Fishing
30 Village Memorial Visitors Center.

